

KEY NEWS

FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS

From seasonal events for the community to providing for those most in need, there's been lots of Christmas cheer.

Funding secured
Check out how this will benefit the community.

Fancy winning £50?
Give your thoughts on how we can support you.



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Online



ongo.co.uk
enquiries@ongo.co.uk

OngoHomes
 @ongoUK

Call us



01724 279900
We record all calls for training and research purposes

My Home



Log in or register at:
myhome.ongo.co.uk
Or to download the app, search 'Ongo My Home' in your app store

WhatsApp



A message from Chief Exec Steve

Welcome to the final Key News of 2021. I want to thank everyone for this last year, one where we have all helped each other and still achieved so much.

We've now made it even easier for you to give us your thoughts and ideas as we've introduced text message and email surveys. This has already led to a much higher amount of responses. Getting your feedback is vital to understand how you feel and where we need to improve.

I'm delighted that we've been able to secure over £138k of funding through the Reconnect programme. This will allow us to support you even more through a range of sessions and activities which will build your confidence and enhance skills.

[Click here to find out more.](#)



It's been heartwarming to see how much has been happening in the community to celebrate the festive season (check out pages six and seven), and I'm looking forward to what next year will bring including:

Offering more wellbeing, tenancy and employment support to you

Further investment in existing homes, new homes and your community

Getting more of you involved to influence improvements

Have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Steve

Getting in touch has never been easier

There have been some specific options added if you need to call us.

This will mean you're put straight through to the right person or team so your query is dealt with straight away.

You will be asked to select one of the following:

- 1 - The automated payment line to pay your rent
- 2 - Income Collection (e.g. if you want to discuss your rent)
- 3 - Property Services (e.g. booking a repair)
- 4 - Tenancy Services (e.g. report anti-social behaviour)
- 5 - Lettings, homeownership and leasehold queries
- 6 - Communities (e.g. for employment support)
- 7 - This includes two options. The first will signpost you to your local council if you are calling about something only they deal with, and the second is for if the previous options don't cover the reason for your call

// These changes will make things clearer and simpler for us all. //

Jill, a tenant involved in the process

There are many ways to contact us:



Christmas cheer

We've been doing lots to get you into the festive spirit!

Dine & Dance

The annual celebration returned this year as more than 60 tenants over the age of 55 enjoyed an afternoon together. A two-course Christmas lunch was accompanied by festive music, dancing and smiles aplenty.



Lighting the way

A group of Barton residents have decorated their bungalows with a Christmas lights display for charity.

Richard Norris of Beretun Green decided to raise money for Lindsey Lodge after his wife passed away recently. They have raised over £1,000 so far.

He said: "I just wanted to put a smile on people's faces, brighten our community and raise money for an inspiring cause. We had a grand opening where we had Christmas music plus a resident dressed as an elf giving out mince pies and sweets, and everybody loved it."

"People have been so generous with their donations and with their kind comments about the display, I can't thank them enough."



Giving something back

Our two community hubs, The Arc and Viking Centre, have held a range of activities throughout December.

Santa and elf-inspired days, parties, craft sessions and a trip to the pantomime were just some of the festivities that were on offer. The Arc have also arranged to host a lunch on Christmas Day for 30 residents who would have otherwise been alone.



Christmas decorations

The Tenancy Services team have ensured that each retirement scheme, and our dementia care scheme Myos House, have festive decorations and a Christmas tree.

Barbara Hodson of Chesleigh House, Gainsborough, donated a tree and decorations for their communal lounge. She said: "It really helps to get you into the festive spirit and brings us even closer together as a community."

We want to hear from you on what's happening in your community:



Involved with Ongo

Digital inspections

Our Tenant Inspectors group have recently started virtual inspections of empty homes to ensure they meet the lettable standard.

Members watch a video taken of the property and then give their feedback via an online form.

Robert, a new member of the group, commented: "Everybody made me feel welcome straight away, and it's perfect that I can do these inspections from the comfort of my own home. I work shifts so don't have much spare time, but this fits in with my other commitments and allows me to still influence services."

We need you!

Two of our main tenant groups are looking for new members.

Community Voice decide on all operational customer-facing matters. So, for example, if we wanted to make a change to the way we let our homes, then we wouldn't be able to do anything until the group approve any changes.

The Resident Scrutiny Panel carry out detailed investigations into different services and raise recommendations for improvement. Their next investigation will focus on standard repairs.

Ann Cooper recently joined Community Voice. She said: "It's really opened my eyes to how much influence we have as residents. It's not a case of simply being told what's happening in our homes and communities – we have a chance to work together and decide on these things that affect us."

A big welcome

In November, we visited the residents of our new homes in Lincoln to welcome them to Ongo.

The day offered the chance to meet tenants, give them a welcome box which included plenty of treats and relevant information, plus answer any questions.

Kelly Swain, one of the residents, said: "It was nice to meet staff and be able to find out more about the range of support and opportunities Ongo offer. The welcome box was a really nice gesture too!"

We successfully took over the homes in September after another landlord, Metropolitan Thames Valley, were seeking bids from other housing associations.



The group also do monthly inspections of green-spaces and estates.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the impact they make.

We've launched our new Customer Engagement framework which sets out our commitment to involving you.

[Check out more here](#)

Creating conversations

We have held a number of drop-in sessions in recent months, and will be holding more next year.





Different teams were on hand to explain how you can get involved and make a difference, plus offer advice about home, work and wellbeing support that we can provide.

Sessions were held at our Cole Street office, The Arc and at the Ashby Community Centre. We also visited residents in Bircotes and Balby, and will be holding a session in Barton in the new year.



No matter how much time you can give or what other commitments you have, there are many opportunities for you to have a say. [Click here](#) for more.

Would you like us to do a future session in your community? We want to hear your ideas:

New Homes

Featuring Station Road in Scunthorpe

Town centre completion

37 homes have been built in Scunthorpe.

Based on Station Road, the properties are a mixture of two, three and four-beds. They have a variety of amenities nearby including regular transport links, shops, schools and restaurants.

New tenants are set to move in from January.

Winterton work begins

Building began in November for 40 new homes in Winterton.

The site includes 15 **Rent to Buy** properties, the highest amount of this type we've had in one development, and 12 bungalows each with wet rooms.

Environmental factors such as including green spaces and planting trees will also form an important aspect of the build.

[Click here](#) for further details.

Lincoln progress

A project featuring 12 homes in Sudbrooke, Lincoln is due to be completed next year.

One bungalow and 11 two and three-bed houses are currently being built, with four of the properties being available for **Shared Ownership**. The homes will be on Parklands Drive and are only a ten minute journey from Lincoln city centre with transport links nearby.

// This will have a balance of being a tight-knit community, but having its own sense of independence too. //

Amy Schoenmaker, Development Project Manager

Check out the latest news on all our new homes by visiting:
ongo.co.uk/developments



Robert Jones

A Swiss-based correspondent has praised the architecture of our recent Frodingham Road development.

Robert Jones, who grew up in Scunthorpe and attended Crosby Junior School where the homes are now situated, said: "Some of the character of the old school has been retained in the colour and style of the homes, plus the railings which have been maintained. I'm also impressed with the angel memorial."

[Click here](#) to read more of Robert's thoughts.

Helped from the brink

Tracy's life was recently turned upside down when her nan (who she had lived with for 27 years and cared for) passed away.

It left Tracy grieving, devastated and fearful about what would happen with the family home or what she would do for work.

Months later though, she is secure in her home and has been supported into full-time work.

Tracy pays tribute to our Lettings, Employment Support and Recruitment teams for their joint approach:

"Every single person, especially Stacey, Andrea and Anna, were absolutely great and went above and beyond. I was totally lost and felt that I was being pulled in all directions, but their support took a lot of obstacles and worries away.

"I was always given the relevant information and kept updated, they got in touch with me when they said they would and I was supported with various claims which I wouldn't have been able to do on my own. Knowing the support will always be there if needed is very re-assuring.

"I didn't know that all this help was available, and it's been such a relief. I'm now in a much better place mentally, one where I can begin to look forward rather than back."

//
I went from no home, no job, no future, to everything being sorted in a matter of weeks. //



[Click here for more from Tracy.](#)








Want to know how we could help you?

[Click here](#)

Energy saving

With winter upon us and helping the climate a crucial focus, we wanted to provide you with some energy saving tips to reduce your bills.

-  Turn lights and appliances off when you're not using them
-  Turn your thermostat down by one degree - the ideal range is 18°C to 21°C
-  Reduce draughts wherever possible as you will lose heat
-  When cooking, try to cook batches of food for several meals
-  Put lids on pans so the food will cook quicker

Though these may seem small changes, you'll be surprised at how much of an impact they will make.

Check out more handy hints [here](#)



Do you want to be the reason that improvements are made in your community? Make a lasting impact now and for future generations by becoming an Environmental Champion. [Click here to find out more.](#)

In the Community

Anything is possible

After years of anxiety, depression and being told that he wouldn't be able to achieve anything, Connor has been supported to gain an apprenticeship.

The 28-year-old has autism and, though he had a number of qualifications and the determination to succeed, he kept getting knocked back. All he wanted was a chance to prove himself, and that was where Kelly and our Employment Support team stepped in.

Connor received a range of training, advice and wellbeing support tailored to his needs, something which gave him a more positive outlook on life and led to this employment opportunity.

He said: "It's helped me put the steps in place to thrive now and in the future. I had self-doubt before and put a lot of pressure on myself, but I feel a lot more in control now. I've realised how strong a person I am and that I can rise to any challenge that may come my way."

// **Getting this support and apprenticeship has been a life-saver for me.** //

Find out how we can help improve your confidence, provide new skills and support you to achieve your potential:



[Click here to read Connor's story in full.](#)

Supporting families

Our community hub in Barton, The Viking Centre, has been awarded £1,000 from Tesco's Bags of Help initiative for their parent and baby group.

Check out more details [here](#)



Fancy winning £50?

A range of support is available to you, and we want your thoughts on what work-related help you would like us to provide.

Complete the survey [here](#) to be in with an opportunity of winning a £50 voucher.



Make a difference

We are looking for volunteer minibus drivers to take children, adults and families on day trips around North Lincolnshire.

All you need is to be over the age of 25 with a clean UK driving license and D1 certification.

Email scott.stalgis@ongo.co.uk or message us on **Facebook** if you can help.



Board Trainee Programme

We're launching an exciting programme with the HDN to find future Board Members. The Board Trainee Programme is designed to support individuals to develop their skills and knowledge to be possible future Board Members.

If you have an interest in housing or community investment and a passion to make a difference to the lives of our residents, this could be just the thing for you.

It's a two year programme where you will receive comprehensive training, shadow Ongo Board and Committee meetings and take part in sessions with trainees from other local housing associations. Expenses are covered so there are no barriers to being involved.

You don't need to be the finished article as this programme is designed to support and develop people and give them the skills and knowledge to be possible future Board Members.

Here at Ongo we are currently under-represented on our Boards by:

- Younger people (under 30)
- Those that identify as being part of an ethnic minority community
- Individuals that identify as having a disability

We particularly welcome and encourage applications from these under-represented groups.

**Full details can be found on our [website here](#)
The closing date is 14 January 2022.**



Don't forget to let us know what you thought of this edition!

[Click here to give your feedback.](#)

